



Zoning Bylaw Working Group

Date: August 4, 2021

Time: 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM

Location: Conducted via remote participation

Meeting attendees

Present: Eugene Benson, Mike Ciampa, Pam Heidell, Charlie Kalaskas, Christian Klein, Erin Moriarty, Jenny Raitt, Stephen Revilak, John Worden, and Don Seltzer (guest).

Absent: Adam Chapdelaine.

Agenda

1. Introduce new staff
 - a. The committee members introduced themselves.
 - b. Erin Moriarty introduced herself as the new Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development for the Town of Arlington.
2. Update on recent plans completed and plans in progress
 - a. Connect Arlington - The Town's Sustainable Transportation Plan, Connect Arlington, was approved at a recent July Select Board meeting. The Transportation Advisory Committee, the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and other committees and departments are working on the implementation of the plan. John Worden expressed concern over the location of bus stations. Jenny stated representatives from the MBTA are presenting the bus network redesign as part of MassDOT's Better Bus Project at the upcoming Select Board meeting on August 9th; this would be a good avenue for bus-related commentary.
 - b. Net Zero Action Plan - This plan is focused on utilizing and promoting clean energy and electrification within Arlington. This includes some zoning recommendations such as establishing a smart growth zoning overlay, as well as implementing actionable goals from Connect Arlington. Christian Klein requested clarification about assistance for property owners to make energy focused improvements to their private property. Steve recognized that there are significant projects and work to be done outlined in the plan.

- c. Fair Housing Action Plan - This plan empowers the Town and its committees to view all proposals and plans with an equity lens. This may fulfill the Affirmatively Fair Housing Rule which mandates any community that receives CDBG and HOME funds from HUD to complete. The Final Rule will be issued by the Biden Administration this fall. In addition to housing this new plan provides a history related to access and equity in Arlington and provides recommendations for achieving a higher level of equity in the future. Steve recognized the plan includes some recommendations that will enact gradual change towards progress.
- d. Community Conversation on Fair Housing - ACMI video available on the Town's website, includes a presentation and discussion on fair housing from experts in the region and the field of housing.
- e. Arlington Housing Plan – Consultant is performing a Needs Assessment now to catalogue progress since last plan and recommendations for the future. Upcoming community forum scheduled for September 14, staff has attended Farmers Markets to spread the word, residents and committee members are encouraged to host Meeting in a Box to gather more opinions.
- f. Open Space Recreation Plan - Current plan expires in 2022 and is in the process of being updated. Consultant is working on content and community engagement opportunities through “listening posts”, a survey, and more to come.
- g. Minute Man Bikeway Visioning Process - Process is in the very beginning, contracting with Kittelson as a consultant, and planning has not started yet. Working with the MBTA to improve access for multimodal transportation throughout the Town. The plan will evaluate safety, best practices, and regional connectivity. Ralph Willmer mentioned the Lexington Trail Network as a comparable project to evaluate.
- h. Comments/Questions
 - i. Eugene Benson identified some overlap exists within the various plans such as within the Fair Housing Plan and Connect Arlington and may need more targeted effort to provide guidance on prioritizing competing recommendations. For example, reducing parking requirements where the MBTA provides bus service; however, the bus system may have changes in service that would need to be responded to. Jenny reminded the group of the MBTA bus network redesign presentation at the Select Board, there will be ongoing opportunities to get involved and share opinions in that planning process.

- ii. Steve identified some benefits of changes to public space as came about during or because of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is possibility for more change moving into the future.
 - iii. John Worden commented on an issue with gas leaking into the public right of way and wondering if the clean energy plan is addressing those concerns. Jenny stated this may be an issue for Public Works and they should be alerted if a gas leak is suspected.
- 3. Upcoming potential zoning amendment projects
 - a. MBTA Communities guidelines should be forthcoming with community engagement plans in the future. Resolution passed at Spring Town Meeting relating to Broadway Corridor following a study by MIT students. This could lead to broader East Arlington planning in the future. More info should be available for discussion at the September meeting. Ralph concurred MBTA guidelines are forthcoming. John asked if the bus turnaround in the Heights is under discussion. He questioned the requirements of developments; however, without the guidance posted from the State there is no way to determine requirements.
 - b. The ARB has been in hiatus and will be meeting towards the end of the summer to reinstate progress on new ideas, projects, bylaws, etc. Charles Kalauskas expressed concern over the current state of the Zoning Map as it solidifies 1970s land uses but does not allow for changes in needs related to housing, commercial, and more. Jenny added this was going to be addressed as part of a broader rezoning and sign bylaw update, which unfortunately could not proceed (only the sign bylaw amendments were able to proceed). It is high on the ARB's list of future projects. Pam added that height limitations should allow for challenges in the flood districts and should be evaluated as part of the zoning discussion. Christian stated that residential parking language could be re-evaluated for clarity and ease of use. John added that an increase in affordable housing could be accomplished by acquiring property and converting it to affordable housing. He clarified that parks should not be utilized for development and that mixed-use buildings should contribute to parks and public space.
 - c. Stormwater Bylaw will be re-evaluated with additional recommendations as part of the original recodification discussion. More coordination across boards is expected. Eugene requested cross discussion between the ZBWG and ARB on future initiatives. Steve mentioned the Somerville Master Plan as a comparable inclusionary zoning example for review.
- 4. Review minutes from March 3, 2021.
 - a. Christian moves to approve, Charles seconds (5-0-1) Ralph abstains from vote. Minutes approved.

5. Next steps:

- a. 2021 Meeting Dates: September 1, October 6, November 3, December 1
- b. The committee discussed meeting time and format.
 - i. John would prefer in-person and later in the day
 - ii. Others are ok with early meeting: Steve, Christian, Gene
 - iii. Add to agenda for next meeting for discussion.

Meeting adjourned 9:45am.